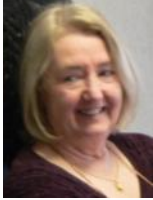


## Garden Forks at the Ready



**Editor:** Margaret Thompson.

**Sub Editor:** Jill Ibbott.

**Proof Reader:** John Reeve.

HELLIBORES, harbingers of spring. What a welcome sight amid the dark, grey grimy days we have been experiencing. Thank you Pam Grant for these beautiful photographs of the Garden Group trip to Sir Harold Hillier's wonderful garden. The second picture is a



timely reminder of what we need to be doing in the garden at the moment but despite the spirit and the flagging muscles being willing this is not easy when the ground is so 'claggy'.

There has been a lot of concern about the withdrawal of Bank Cheques from our monetary system but as this is not until **2018** my main thought is that I will be so pleased if I am around to see it!

I suggested to my banker son that by then we would probably all have our pin numbers tattooed onto our foreheads, in code of course, so that we could touch the screen with our head and bingo! But Nooo!

He says that by then there will be a much improved system of money transfer and I have to say that already, with this rapid transfer BACs on line, money is taken from one account to another almost instantly; quicker than by cheque, as the money is there already cleared.

If SGLs made the sort code and account number for their group available to members then payment could be transferred to that account either on line or over the counter in the bank. Once the payment showed on the group's balance sheet the SGL could 'tick off' that member on their list of interested participants. Anyway it is a fair way off, so we have lots of time to plan.

I hope everybody who heard Robert Low give his presentation about Gilbert & Sullivan enjoyed both his tales and his singing as much as I did. It brought back wonderful memories of happy days treading the boards in my local Operatic Society.



*Study Group  
Topics*

by Margaret  
Foster

Study Group  
Coordinator

[Studygroups@watfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:Studygroups@watfordu3a.org.uk)



HELLO Everyone, Thank you to the 40 Study Group Leaders who attended the SGLs Meeting on Friday 11th March. It was very nice to see you. I hope you found the meeting useful. We used a new venue which we all agreed is good and to which we will return in September. Once again a very lively meeting at which a number of items were discussed.

You may remember at the January monthly meeting our Chairman presented a cheque to Jill Crowson, Fund Raising Manager for the Peace Hospice. In her reply Jill suggested we hold coffee mornings in our homes to help raise funds. Following a suggestion by one of our members, our coffee break at the May meeting will be a "U3A for Peace" coffee/tea break. There will be a box for voluntary donations which will be sent to the Peace Hospice. This will be an opportunity for those of us who would like to help this very worthy and necessary cause to swell their funds. This idea was discussed at Committee and at the SGLs Meeting and all agree it is a good idea, with which we hope you agree.

Please remember when you send items for the Newsletter and Group News to put the name of the group not just "for the Newsletter". Remembering this will make Jill's job easier.

If you have not yet given your emergency contact number and name of the person to be contacted to your Study Group leader please do so at your next meeting. This is for your benefit.

Please note I must receive all items to go on the Notice boards for the monthly meeting no later than 4pm on the Friday before the meeting.

The response to the news of a new group "Discovering the South East" was terrific. 73 members signed the list at the meeting and more have contacted us asking to be added to the list. The reason we needed another group was that the Exploring London Group is full and has a

*Continued on page 2*

*Message  
From the  
Chairman*  
**Terry Godfrey**



ANOTHER month and we are speeding towards Summer and another AGM.

One wonders what our contemporaries in Japan are thinking, realising that they have lost families, friends, possessions and in many cases own nothing except the clothes that they are wearing. We should take a few moments to reflect how fortunate we are and how trivial our complaints are while others are suffering so much. We complain, when we cannot get the preferred seat at a monthly meeting, or are too late to join a group activity but we all have so much to be thankful for, not least, the U3A which has brought us all together in friendship.

I attended the recent SGLs meeting and having attended previous meetings, the Group Leaders never cease to impress me with their commitment and enthusiasm. We all know that without their hard work and dedication WU3A would not be as popular as it is and long may it last.

My sincere thanks to the SGLs and I thank you all for your continued support.

## BURNT TOAST AND PEAR DROPS

by John Britten



waiting list. Therefore the new group is being started to take members who cannot get onto the Exploring London Group. In view of this any member who is on the Exploring London list and has put their name on the new group list has been put on a reserve list. We feel this is the only fair way to operate these two groups. This group will be bi-monthly to begin with, the first outing being in July. Tickets will be on sale at the May meeting; more details will be on the board at the monthly meeting in April.

I have been contacted by Herts Sports Partnership who are working in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council. They are contacting U3As with a view to starting new exercise groups. Each group will be led by a fully qualified exercise instructor with an emphasis on fun, enjoyment and social exercise, and local to individual U3As. 10-20 members will be needed to start the group which will be free for the first year. If you are interested please sign the list which will be available at the monthly meeting or telephone me. Either way I will need your Name, Membership Number, Tel. No. and email address.

It is New Membership Card time. This year it is a nice pale green. Please have your new card available for your SGL to check at your Study Group Meeting. Just a reminder, if you are paying for trips or outings, Cheques only –No cash.

Good News, “Cotswolds” the outdoor equipment store housed in the pyramid at the bottom of Watford High Street will give 10% discount to members who show their membership card. I am told the staff are very knowledgeable, helpful and friendly. The store is well worth a visit. Lots to think about this month so I will close by wishing you a very happy and safe month and look forward to seeing you at the monthly meeting.

NO, not the latest gourmet ice cream flavour, but rather just two of the phrases, along with “rubbery tyres”, “cats’ pee” and “bitter chocolate” which were used to describe some of the wines at the January meeting of the Wine Appreciation Study Group. Some group members seem to be developing a classic wine writers’ vocabulary!

For our first meeting of the year, Tony offered a “compare and contrast” exercise, with pairs of wines from each of four grapes to illustrate the effect that different climates, cultivation and vinification methods can have on the finished wine. Generally we preferred the more expensive of each pair, although the differences were not always very marked. The two wines which seemed to be most appreciated both cost **£8.99** a bottle. A **Pinot Gris from Alsace** was reckoned to be better than a cheaper one from South Africa, and an **Australian Shiraz by Peter Lehmann** scored more points than one from the Bortoli family. The Chilean Malbec was marked lower than a French one, but neither was thought to be as good value as most Argentinean brands. And according to the militant wing of the ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) tendency, the two Chardonnays were nothing special.

The meeting was also marked by far more broken glasses than usual; not a sign of inebriation, nor even of appreciation as in Greek restaurants, but rather as an indication of the lively discussion and easy atmosphere which marks all our meetings.

Tony returned from one of his regular trips “down under” for our February meeting, so it was no great surprise that we tasted eight wines from Australia. Unfortunately he did not bring back any of the superb “hand-made” wines from boutique wineries; airline restrictions and the strength of the dollar conspired against that. But there are many good Australian wines to choose from in our own supermarkets – a ten or twenty-fold increase in the range in recent years, although it was still a surprise to learn that some have been on sale in Britain since before 1939. And despite producing only 4% of the world’s total wine, Australia now exports 40% of its production; not just to the UK but increasingly also to Asia and the Far East.

Australian varietal labelling was perhaps where many of us learnt about the character of different grapes, especially the twin antipodean specialities of honeyed oak Chardonnay, and big beefy Shiraz. But we tasted several others, and neither of those two “signature” varieties was the most popular with all our members. Amongst the whites, a **Pino Grigio from the family firm of Brown Brothers** was liked by everyone, whilst a **Semillon/Sauvignon blend from Plantaganet Samsons** was the top choice of many. Of the reds, **Rosemount’s Diamond range Grenache/Shiraz** blend was the unanimous choice, just beating the family owned **St. Hallet Wines’ straight Shiraz**. Although this latter had the peppery taste that we expect from the grape, the wine was so smooth and rich that it won over one or two members who don’t usually like the variety. The most expensive bottle this month – at £10.99 - was a **Yarra Valley Pinot Noir**. With a typically quirky name of “Willing Participant”, from the “Innocent Bystander” winery we were not sure quite what to expect. Some found it a little bitter and metallic, but those who enjoy a good burgundy were very satisfied. As one member remarked “I could drink a lot of that!



### THIRD AGERS TEAM FOR PEACE HOSPICE STARLIGHT WALK

We already have a team of 12 for this event on June 11th/12th, but would love to have at least 20.

The walk is 6 miles round Watford, is very well organised and supported, and done as a team from amongst U3A friends we should have a lot of fun.

Ladies Only walk, but volunteer marshals, stewards and supporting staff will be very welcome.

Do contact me if you would like to join us –  
Margaret Redding.

### ANTIQUES by Sheila Wolff

OUR subject this month was Photography – not strictly an antique subject though we were surprised to find that this began as early as 1830, and not the mid-C19 as we all thought.

We remembered how in the earliest years of the C20 having one’s photo taken was a bit of an ordeal as you had to stay very still for several seconds and then be prepared for a blinding flash and what seemed to a young five year old bridesmaid, an horrific explosion! Also wedding photographers kindly brought a train one could attach to the hem of the bridal gown if it wasn’t quite splendid enough without it.

As the early equipment was so cumbersome, photographers worked in pairs, presumably one to do the heavy carrying while the other did the artistic work!

Interesting as always to see the pieces and photos that members brought and to see some of the fashions through the last century or so. Certainly a trip down Memory Lane.



## MoneyMatters from Phillip Woolf

UNUSUALLY at our February meeting we had a speaker and a most interesting presentation by Colin Chamberlain who outlined

numerous ways to save/make money with low risk to capital. Always remember that ANY saving or investment has a certain element of risk including non-investment – i.e keeping cash, which is still subject to devaluation due to INFLATION. He also pointed out the benefit of Lasting Powers of Attorney which is in two sections: property and health care, or at least, the health care (including care home financing). This subject was discussed in some detail and gave us all pause for thought and questions, which were answered extensively such as economical ways to pay for it. One point in particular struck me was that with the new form, you pay for it and it is registered when you set it up, whereas on the old form the person nominated as attorney, has to pay when they register it. If anyone wants more information contact Colin, I have his details.

What a wonderful group we are! It never ceases to amaze me what a fount of financial knowledge comes out at our monthly meetings, information that I would never expect other than from professional advisers. At almost every meeting someone comes up to me and tells me that they have learnt from what they have heard. Not from me I hasten to add. To all at U3A who would like new groups to be started I tell you that all you have to do is put your name up as Study Group Leader and all those who join the group will run it! Its as simple as that. If you don't believe me, come to our meetings and you will see.



been sent to the Fairtrade Foundation from Watford – decorated by supporters.

Cotton producers from Mali, Burkina Faso, Chad, Benin and Cameroon have been struggling to survive over the past decade because the United States government and European Parliament have given subsidies of \$47 billion to their own cotton farmers. Thus enabling them to dump cotton on the world market at very low prices, undercutting the West African cotton farmers who have steadily been driven into poverty. The recent Fairtrade Certification of West African cotton has meant that Producers in West Africa have been slowly able to lift themselves out of poverty.

Watford, as many will know has been a Fairtrade Town since 2007 and Three Rivers has been a Fairtrade District since 2008. Both have achieved the Five Goals set by the Fairtrade Foundation for Fairtrade Town status and both have recently had their status renewed for two more years. There are over 220 supporter groups in the Boroughs, including shops and cafés churches, schools, businesses and community groups – including seven U3A groups who have committed to using at least two Fairtrade products at their meetings. There are now 500 Fairtrade Towns in the UK. Fairtrade sales have grown by 40% during 2010 in the UK and totalled £1.17 billion, which shows how ethical shopping is so important to many citizens in this country.

We need to replace two U3A members who have served on the Watford Fairtrade Town Steering Committee – Jill Jenkins and Valerie Webster. Both resigned recently due to either medical or family reasons after having achieved great progress in the Fairtrade Town Campaign. The Committee meets about six times a year and plans fund-raising activities and Fairtrade Fortnight events. Please talk to Jill and Val about this, then volunteer by contacting Brian Mee [bandjmee@ntlworld.com](mailto:bandjmee@ntlworld.com) thank you!

## Garden Group News by Pam Grant

FOR our first outing of 2011 we went in February to the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, near Romsey and we were blessed with a simply beautiful sunny day.

The Gardens were established in 1953 by the distinguished plantsman Sir Harold Hillier, developed considerably in the early 2000s with a large new visitor centre and now contain twelve National Collections as well as many varied features including woodland, pond area and bog garden. In particular, they have the largest Winter Garden in Europe which was our main destination. The glorious sight of snowdrops, hellebores, cornus and witch hazel in particular was a real tonic for everyone and most people walked around much of the remaining area as well in the lovely sunshine.

We then had an indoor meeting in March during which members watched three photo presentations. The first one by Diane Livesey took us round some favourite gardens we had visited as a Group, Hazel and Ian then took us to Norway to an island garden they had visited near Stavanger. The beautiful gardens included palms and cacti that seemed to be happy at the Northern latitude thanks to the sheltered site and the proximity of the Gulf Stream. I rounded off the morning with a glimpse of some of the fauna and flora of South Africa. The morning was well received – maybe there are other Group members who would like to organize something similar in the future?



## SEWING FOR FAIRTRADE

From Brian Mee

MEMBERS of the Needlecraft Group have each decorated a Fairtrade cotton flag as a contribution to the Fairtrade Foundation's World Record attempt at making the longest string of fair Bunting. All the flags are Fairtrade cotton from West Africa and have been purchased from the Producers at a guaranteed sustainable price, slightly above the world price and with a Social Premium added which enables the communities to build amenities such as schools, hospitals, storage sheds for produce, water supplies, playgrounds, etc. Over 100 flags have



## Greetings From a Weather Man

I'M Maurice Crewe and I have surprised myself to discover that I have 'volunteered' to be the new leader of the Science Interest Group.

Well you may be interested to know that the Science Group is going to change. Not because of a new broom syndrome but because as a relatively new member of the U3A I don't yet know what I'm

doing. How does a new boy follow chaps like Tony Platts and Brian Mee. Great thanks are due to Tony for his work over the last year for the Science Interest Group and in his several roles for the Watford U3A over the years, helping it to become an organisation to which we enjoy belonging, and to Brian Mee who began the WU3A Science Interest Group when Watford U3A was started in 1997 and was the leader until April 2010. – I'll try and do my best, guys.

I may be new to the U3A but I have dabbled in science for many years, becoming a weather observer as a National Service Airman in 1957. Then in the Met Office for nearly 40 years I became a weather forecaster, mostly on RAF stations, then at the Bracknell headquarters. I had a spell in technical administration, a few years in operational research and finished up in charge of the National Meteorological Library and Archives and a Fellow of the Royal Meteorological Society. I was lucky to be around when due to staff shortages I could progress with 'A' levels plus experience.

The best thing to come out of school of course, was meeting my late better half. Having spent the first 20 or so years of our lives being brought up in Enfield we then spent half a century keeping away from the Home Counties until moving to Watford in 2007 to be nearer the family who live in Hatch End.

I will try and master the briefing material that Tony is passing on to me, and with what I hear is an ace team to help, I look forward to an interesting and educative spell with the Science Interest Group, and invite you artistic types who boast about not understanding science to come along and see that it can be fun learning how the world works.

## Hertfordshire Archives 2011 Millennium Lecture series: Celebrating one thousand years of Hertfordshire's history in writing.

IN 1011, the Anglo Saxon Chronicle records the invasion of 'Hertfordshire' by the rapacious Viking hordes of Sweyn Forkbeard, son of Harald Bluetooth! This is the first time 'Hertfordshire' appears in the written word, and the earliest evidence for its existence.

Throughout 2011 Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies, the repository for Hertfordshire's written history, will be celebrating the 'Hertfordshire Millennium'. There will be opportunities for all Hertfordshire residents, past and present, to get involved in a variety of activities either online or in person.

To raise awareness of Hertfordshire's turbulent and colourful past, how the county was formed, and who decided where its boundaries would be, a series of Millennium talks will be held at Hertfordshire Archives, focusing on Hertfordshire through the centuries, using documents from the archives to explore how its identity has been formed, and what makes Hertfordshire special today.

Lectures will cover the whole range of Hertfordshire's history and will be presented by guest speakers and Archives staff. Highlights include talks on Witchcraft by Dr Owen Davies of the University of Hertfordshire and Hertfordshire Parks and Gardens by Anne Rowe of the Hertfordshire Gardens Trust.

- |                      |                                    |              |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>19 April:</b>     | Medieval Hertfordshire.            | Susan Flood  |
| <b>17 May:</b>       | Tudor Hertfordshire.               | Daphne Knott |
| <b>21 June:</b>      | 17th Century Hertfordshire.        | Alan Thomson |
| <b>19 July:</b>      | Witchcraft in Hertfordshire.       | Owen Davies  |
| <b>20 September:</b> | Hertfordshire Parks and Gardens.   | Anne Rowe    |
| <b>18 October:</b>   | Hertfordshire and the Wider World. | Susan Flood  |
| <b>22 November:</b>  | 20th Century Hertfordshire.        | Daphne Knott |

**Lectures start at 18.30. The Oak Room. Register Office Block, County Hall, Hertford SG13 8EJ**

Original documents relating to the lectures will be on display from 18.00 in the Archive Reading Room

**.Cost £3 per lecture or £20 for the series.**

**Advanced booking essential**

**Telephone: 0300 1234 049 (ask for Local Studies)**

**e-mail: [hertsdirect@hertscc.gov.uk](mailto:hertsdirect@hertscc.gov.uk) [www.hertsdirect.org/hals](http://www.hertsdirect.org/hals)**

## Current Affairs by John Crowder

OUR February and March meetings followed a different pattern from usual. In February Ray Gynne, one of our members, gave us a presentation on The Media and we were made fully aware how much our knowledge of what's going on in the world depends on the presentations by press and television, largely dominated by organisations run by Rupert Murdoch, the Barclay Brothers (Telegraph) and in the USA, Fox News (that's why we hear about Sarah Palin). Dominance by these organisations means that it has become very difficult to obtain unbiased information and comment, though The Guardian and The Independent try to redress the balance. This discussion led us to talk about phonetapping, and about the use of court rulings to suppress reports about wealthy individuals who can afford to pay to have their cases considered under the law.

We moved on to discuss the inordinate damages awarded by courts in cases of medical errors, and of racial and sexual discrimination. Wounded soldiers receive far less compensation despite their sacrifice. Other topics included the ill treatment some old people receive under the NHS and the fear that when hospitals become businesses this situation will deteriorate further. Government cuts and their effects on libraries, policing and defence spending also provided grist to our mill.

At our March meeting, group member Alan Humphries gave us a masterful presentation of the Alternative Voting (AV) system that will be the subject of a referendum at the time of the local elections in May. The basis of an election system should be to achieve fairness and while the "first past the post" aims to achieve this, it has limitations. Under AV, each elector can cast a vote for his/her first choice and if a candidate receives more than 50% of the total vote he or she is elected. Each elector has also one second choice vote and if no candidate receives the 50%, then the second choices of the candidate receiving the least number of votes will be allocated among the others. This procedure will be repeated until one candidate receives the required 50%. In general the result will not be greatly affected but it can be (vide Ed Miliband's election in the Labour Party). At least the result will be more acceptable than under Proportional Representation, in that a person rather than a party would be elected, but is the extra effort and cost of AV justified and is it fairer? The fear is that lack of interest may let it succeed in the referendum by default.

Debate on other topics followed. Census forms had recently been distributed and we doubted how accurately they would give a picture of the country's population. Why are there no coloured faces in Watford U3A and can we alter this situation? What can or should be done to affect climate change? Discussions of these and other topics continued at our annual lunch at The Blue Check.

**Look at our website for more information :[www.watfordu3a.org.uk](http://www.watfordu3a.org.uk)**

## Exploring London by Pat Harding

OUR first trip for 2011 was a visit to the Cabinet War Rooms. Although we arrived early, the receptionist took pity on us and allowed us in, especially, as it was so cold. There we picked up our audio guides and set off. The museum was the underground emergency headquarters as used by Churchill and the British Government during World War II. We saw many of the rooms such as those used by Churchill for his famous BBC broadcasts, the Map Room and various private rooms.

There was also the Churchill Museum which follows the life of Churchill, 1874-1965, where we could see artefacts and audiovisual displays. The lifeline display caused a lot of fun. There you could tap in a date which opened documents, photographs and film clips relating to Churchill. On certain key dates the whole table would erupt – such as bombers flying over for the dam busters and noisy explosions for the Hiroshima bomb.

After lunch we walked to the Central Hall Westminster where Frank was our guide. Unfortunately we couldn't visit the main hall as essential repairs were being made to the balcony and the organ. However we visited the visitor centre, chapel and climbed the stairs to see the rolls of honour. Frank gave us an interesting talk about the history of the hall and told us about some of the characters involved. We can return when the repairs are finished and he will take us onto the balcony overlooking Westminster Abbey, one of the best views in London.



Westminster Abbey from Central Hall

### ***If you thought you had problems with your computer software, see below***

#### **Dear Tech Support,**

Last year I upgraded from Boyfriend to Husband and noticed a distinct slowdown in overall system performance, particularly in the flower and jewellery applications, which operated flawlessly under Boyfriend.

In addition, Husband uninstalled many other valuable programmes, such as Romance and Personal Attention and then installed undesirable programs such as Rugby, Football, Sailing and Continuous TV. Conversation no longer runs, and Housecleaning simply crashes the system. I've tried running Nagging to fix these problems, but to no avail. What can I do?

#### **Signed, Desperate**

#### **Dear Desperate,**

First keep in mind, Boyfriend is an Entertainment Package, while Husband is an Operating System.

Please enter the command: 'http: I thought you loved me. html' and try to download Tears. Don't forget to install the Guilt update. If that application works as designed, Husband should then automatically run the applications Jewellery and Flowers, but remember – overuse of the above application can cause Husband to default to Grumpy Silence, Garden Shed or Beer. Beer is a very bad program that will download the Snoring Loudly Beta.

Whatever you do, DO NOT install Mother-in-law (it runs a virus in the background that will eventually seize control of all your system resources). Also, do not attempt to reinstall the Boyfriend program. These are unsupported applications and will crash Husband.

In summary, Husband is a great system, but it does have limited memory and cannot learn new applications quickly. It also tends to work better running one task at a time. You might consider buying additional software to improve memory and performance. We recommend Food and Hot Lingerie.

**Good Luck, Tech Support**



With the latter, having covered the geographical formation and human settling of the Americas, the subjects discussed were the period of Benjamin Franklin, the War of Independence and the Civil War. Medieval England has produced some fascinating nuggets of information.

Pat Woollard's presentation showed clothing of the period and relevant details. One being that in the mid 14th century a law was introduced governing the type of clothing that could be worn according to status and income. Buttons were introduced in 1330, but in order to wear a bodice fitting dress a lady had to have the sleeves sewn on whilst wearing the dress. As usual all members were involved in researching and sharing information and discussing the current subjects. Next month we will be looking at the move into the West in the USA mid 19th century, also musical instruments of Medieval England – diverse but interesting.

New members are welcome.

### **History Group From Pat Woollard**

We are continuing our monthly meetings looking at the two subjects started last year and running in conjunction – Medieval England and the history of the United States of America.



# SCIENCE INTEREST PAGE

## ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

### February Meeting

by Tony Platts

PAUL MOSTYN, a retired maths and physics teacher, gave a talk in February on Alternative Medicine. His exposition was not clinically based, rather more ideological and conceptual in nature.

He began by revealing his concern for the misuse of words, such as 'energy', 'healing' and 'natural', especially in relation to homeopathy (founded by Samuel Harneman, 1749-1843) which he proceeded to debunk by quoting Avogadro's number which is often exceeded during the dilution of some homeopathic remedies, thus making any therapeutic effect virtually impossible.

He then proceeded to disparage those reports of clinical trials in which some of the cases were 'cherry-picked' in order to produce the results desired by the makers of the product in question. In particular, he felt incensed when newspapers tended to quote only one series of results from only one source and mentioned the questionable use of cranberry juice in the treatment of urinary infections and hypnotherapy for Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

Far more influential is the use of meta-analysis which compared the results of many trials. Cochrane Reviews are systematic reviews of primary research in human health care and health policy and recognised by clinicians internationally as the highest standard in evidence-based health care. The placebo effect, where it is known that around one third of subjects are likely to have a positive response when given an inert substance due to the psychological effect, only serves to make the validity of trials more difficult to determine. So blind clinical trials, where roughly half of the trial subjects are given an inert substance (e.g. a sugar such as lactose), are more helpful although double-blind trials are preferable. With the latter the trial group is given the test substance and then switched to the inert compound half way through the trial unbeknown to the coordinator or trial subjects, while the reverse happens with the other group. (Further information can be found at: [http://www.csicop.org/si/show/alternative\\_medicine\\_and\\_the\\_laws\\_of\\_physics](http://www.csicop.org/si/show/alternative_medicine_and_the_laws_of_physics).)



## CULHAM CENTRE FOR FUSION ENERGY

by Roger Milhard

ON 16 MARCH, members of the Science Interest Group visited Culham Centre For Fusion Energy in Oxfordshire. After an introductory talk, Chris Warrick, the Commercial Manager, explained the number of ways electrical energy can be produced before focusing on the benefits of the fusion reaction and how it works; the fusing of two Hydrogen ions to form Helium, thus releasing large quantities of energy as in our sun and all the stars in the universe.

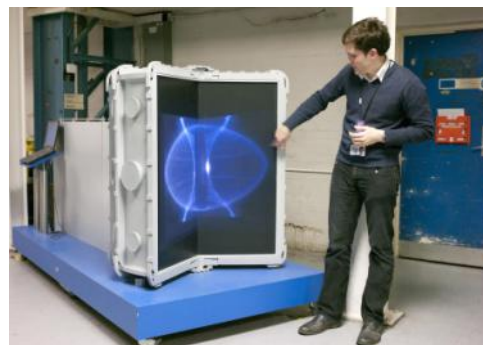
A major problems today is coping with the ever increasing demand for safely produced electricity. Culham Centre for Fusion Energy, is the home of the

international collaboration, started in 1973 to research bringing fusion powered electricity to a state where it can provide electricity equivalent to that of present day power stations.

Fusion reactor MAST (Mega Amp Spherical Tokamak) and JET (Joint European Torus) is the largest tokamak – a magnetic confinement device – in the world are the massive pieces of research equipment used. In the case of JET the torus (doughnut shape) is 5 metres high and 1 metre across. Both research tools attempt to provide similar conditions to those of our own sun.

Today's research is to determine the optimum conditions to allow two forms of Hydrogen (Deuterium and Tritium) to combine to form Helium, thus releasing a large quantity of energy. For fusion to take place a temperature of 150 million degrees Celsius is required to produce what is called a plasma. The plasma is notoriously unstable and must not touch any sides of its containing vessel (the torus). This is achieved by a large array of magnets. To date, it is possible to create short bursts of plasma and it has been proven that this can be a continuous process. At present the materials that line the torus, currently made of carbon fibre, do not have the necessary properties required for a continuously working power station, and research is ongoing to find a suitable beryllium ceramic based material.

Scientists are confident that all the problems can be solved and the construction of the next generation of fusion reactors, has begun at Cadarache in France. It is called ITER ("the way" in Latin), and will be the first experimental fusion reactor to produce significant amounts of energy, i.e. ten times the amount of energy put in. Completion is expected in 2019. This will be followed by a lengthy period of operation that will test the essential physics and technologies for the fusion power plants of the future.



William demonstrating a cut out model of Jet photo Peter Branch WP U3A

We all found our visit a very enlightening and educational experience.

## Calendar for July 2011

sent in by Alan Prest

THIS IS THE ONLY TIME WE WILL SEE AND LIVE THIS EVENT

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

This year, July has 5 Fridays, 5 Saturdays and 5 Sundays. This happens once every 823 years

# STUDY GROUP NEWS

Sub Editor Study Group News

Please see 'The Study Group Synopsis' for Group Leaders' contact numbers and times and venues of Study Group Meetings.



The next 'Study Group News' is due to be published in May. Please send me

your contributions for the May issue by

20 April to

[watfordu3a@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:watfordu3a@yahoo.co.uk)

It would be very helpful if those of you who do not already do so would put **SGN** and your **Group name** in the subject box of your email. Also there are still some contributors who do not adhere to the request for the **Times Roman font and 10pt**. It cuts down the time taken to prepare the Newsletter so if you can remember this it would be much appreciated.

Thank you. Jill.

## Anglo-German Walks

4<sup>th</sup> Frid 9.30am.

## Antiques

2<sup>nd</sup> Tues 2.00-4.00pm at my home.

12 Apr Tea and Coffee – cups, etc., and furniture for storage.

## Art Appreciation

2<sup>nd</sup> Mon 10am for 10.30am at Hollytree House.

In March Pat Woollard gave us a wonderful insight into the interesting work of Bushey Artist Hubert von Herkomer.

11 Apr Various Presenters.

“Art we would like our grandchildren to know.”

Group full at present.

## Book Discussion

### Group

4<sup>th</sup> Mon 2.30-4.30pm.

28 Devereux Drive.

## Chess

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tues 9.30am.

We have dwindling numbers of players coming so I would like any player who has never been to consider coming. Any strength of play is very acceptable and I would be pleased to re-teach any past-players. Those who do attend have some great games.

## Computers

3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs 2.00pm Thorpe Community Room, Garston Fire Station, St Albans Road, (Next to Asda).

Future subjects to be looked at are The Use of Paint, Power Point, Picture management (use of Adobe and Picasso), System Manager, Security and Passwords, using e-bay and any subject that YOU need help with.

New members welcome.

## Classics Group

3<sup>rd</sup> Mon 2.15pm.

New members are always welcome.

## Cryptic Crosswords

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Fri of the month.

I regret this group is full.

## Current Affairs

3<sup>rd</sup> Tues 10.00am.

Hollytree House.

19 Apr Next meeting.

## Cycling

1<sup>st</sup> Mon and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed starting at Watford Met Station at 10.00am.

I have decided to change one of the days on which I run cycling. I have long wished to join the groups for Music Appreciation and Jazz Appreciation. In order to attend the former I will transfer the Wednesday ride to the second Friday of the month, starting on May 13<sup>th</sup>. The Monday ride will continue as before.

I am not sure when I will be able to lead rides at the moment. If I am able I will turn up and lead. If I am not around, I am sure that someone will have a bright idea as to where to go. In that case, just follow him or her to see where you land up.

4 Apr 20 Apr, 2 May Meet

and go where fancy takes you.

13 May St Albans via Chiswell

Green. **NB. This is the second**

**Friday.**

## DIY Discussion

2<sup>nd</sup> Mon 10am-12 noon Tree

Bridge House, Garston La.

## European Studies

4<sup>th</sup> Wed 10.00am.

27 Apr Napoleon 1812-1815 and Congress of Vienna and exile. Followed by Lunch at the Blue Check Restaurant

This group is full.

## Exploring London

6 Apr Tower of London, waiting list

4 May City walk with Blue badge guide and tour of Guildhall Art Gallery. We are using two Blue badge guides, splitting into two groups with break for lunch. Some tickets still available. Please see us at the meeting. Cheques only please.

## Film Group

1<sup>st</sup> Thurs 2.15pm.

52 Malden Road.

7 Apr Sleeping with the Enemy.

5 May Amadeus.

9 Jun Raising Arizona.

Sorry, this group is now full.

There is a waiting list.

## Gardening

20 Apr WEDS (Day changed from Thurs because of Easter). Birmingham Botanical Gardens. Waiting list only.

19 May A Spring outing to Sheffield Park in Sussex, a lovely National Trust destination which we have only visited before in Autumn.

Tickets on sale to Group members in April, on open sale in May.

16 Jun Outing to RHS Gardens at Hyde Hall in Essex. More details later.

**Cheques only for payments please.**

## Genealogy

Normally 2<sup>nd</sup> Frid 10.00am.

Watford Rural Parish Council Hall, Oxhey Drive, South Oxhey

## German Conversation

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs 10am-12 Noon

This group is now full.

## Greetings Cards

Hollytree House

2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 10.00am & 1.30pm.

14 Apr. As for March? (YF away)

## History

2<sup>nd</sup> Mon 2.00pm Fire Station Garston (Asda CP off A41).

## Italian

Alt Thurs 10.00am.

A self help group, using audio/visual material, written exercises and original Italian texts. We are guided by a fluent Italian speaker.

## Jazz

3<sup>rd</sup> Wed 2.30pm.

We did a Tribute to the late George Shearing at our Meeting and the next programme will be a collection of styles of Jazz. Big bands and small groups all included which, hopefully, will provide an interesting listening for all there. I will cover all styles. You are most welcome, and it will be at 13 Devereux Drive, Cassiobury as Col. Bob is still hospitalised.

## Lifestyle

26 Apr 2pm at Combewood Speaker: Brain Mee.

Subject: Fair Trade.

We are in the process of finalising the programme for the next year. The result of our re-organisation as a group is that there is now a small committee who are sharing the tasks so that not all the work is done by the group leader.

## London Theatre Group

We have tickets for THE NAKED TRUTH on 23<sup>rd</sup> May at 7.30pm at the Aylesbury Riverside Theatre. Price £26 inc coach.

9 Jun We are also going to the matinee performance of THE MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET at The Noel Coward Theatre Cost £35 inc. Coach. Please ring Eileen or Marie if you can't make meeting but wish to go. Please remember your cheque book.

Look at our website for more information :[www.watfordu3a.org.uk](http://www.watfordu3a.org.uk)

5th April is the deadline for payment.

### **Luncheon Club**

4<sup>th</sup> Wed.

Any members who would like to join us for lunch please phone Fay for further details.

### **Money Matters**

1<sup>st</sup> Thurs 10.00am to Noon  
Hollytree House.

### **Music Appreciation**

3<sup>rd</sup> Wed: 10.00am Coffee and chat. 10.30am meeting.

20 Apr We will see Leonard Bernstein, rehearsing and recording a performance of West Side Story in 1985. This features Kiri Te Kanawa, Jose Carreras and Tatiana Troyanos. This is the first time that Bernstein conducted a complete performance of his greatest work.

### **Needlecraft**

1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mon, 10am at  
Combewood, Garston.

### **Opera**

2<sup>nd</sup> Mon 2.00pm at Christine's. In March we enjoyed the last two acts of Don Carlos with Rolando Villazon in the lead role, Simon Keenleyside as Rodrigo, and Feruccio Furlanetto as King Philip of Spain. This production was performed at Covent Garden in 2009 and was subsequently shown on TV.

11 Apr - Unfortunately we are unable to meet in April owing to Christine and our other stalwart hosts being unavailable.

9 May - 'Rusalka' by Antonin Dvorak.

13 Jun -La Traviata – a new recording of Verdi's tragic opera with Rene Fleming, Josef Calleja and Thomas Hampson. This is a 'not to be missed' production recorded at Covent Garden in 2009 and at the time was relayed live to cinemas all over the country..

### **Pathfinders Group**

4<sup>th</sup> Tues 9.25am Essex Arms.

26 Apr Studham.

24 May Windsor.

28 Jun Ashridge.

I regret this group is now full

### **Performing Arts**

Mon 11Apr Poetry

Mon 9 May Play reading

Tues 19 Apr Watford Palace –

Time of My Life

Weds 1 Jun Watford Palace –  
Lady in the Van

Thurs 16 Jun Hall Barn,  
Beaconsfield "A Winters Tale"  
Sun 24 Jul Summer Garden  
Party

SGL – Contact for information  
Brian Redding.

### **Science Interest**

3<sup>rd</sup> Mon 10.00am

18 Apr The History of Floor  
Slipperiness: Dr Malcolm  
Bailey.

Prospective new members  
please contact SGL.

### **Scrabble 1**

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thurs.

The group is now full.

### **Scrabble 2**

2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs 10.00am.

Our group is now full.

### **Shakespeare**

Last Wed 2.00pm.

27Apr Continuing the reading  
of 'Hamlet', which we shall be  
discussing. We shall also be  
thinking about our next play, so  
please come with ideas.

25 May next meeting..

### **Snooker**

Every Mon 11.00am-1.00pm.

Joint Group with WPU3A.

### **Sporting Forum**

3<sup>rd</sup> Tues 2.00pm Combewood,  
unless otherwise advised.

19 Apr Magic Moments,  
Memories, Mementoes, Moans.  
Come along and be ready to  
join in a Members forum.

17 May Mr Graham Sterr  
Chairman Watford Football  
Supporters Trust.

18 Oct Advance notice

Trip to London Olympic Sites,  
incl main arena area, plus  
Olympic sites used at London  
docklands and Greenwich.  
Early booking required.  
Contact Allan Humphris.

### **Strollers**

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Tues 11.00am.

12 April Jane and Myra -  
Merryhill Fields. Park at Kemp  
Place and eat at the Blue  
Check.

26 April Phil - Oxhey Playing  
Fields. Meet at the Pavilion.  
Lunch at the Toby Carvery (or  
the Police Club).

### **The Explorers**

1<sup>st</sup> Fri of the month.

6 May - Marsworth. Walk

leader Diane Faulkner. Meet  
Essex Arms to Car Share. Eat  
at White Lion PH, Marsworth.

**The Rock 'n' Roll Yrs 4<sup>th</sup>**  
Thurs 2.30pm Hollytree  
House.

In February we listened to hits  
from Elvis Presley to Johnny  
Ray, Cliff Richard to Tommy  
Steele. We also listened to the  
same song by often little  
known original artists. We  
often preferred the original  
recording although most of us  
had never heard of some of  
these singers before.

28 Apr Original Recordings  
part 2.

May No meeting.

Visitors welcome

### **Thirsty Walkers**

4<sup>th</sup> Thur Essex Arms 9.30am  
car-sharing where possible. We  
always enjoy a good lunch after  
the walk with friendly  
company. Do join us!

The next three walks are:

28 Apr Potten End from  
Martins Pond PH, led by Jill  
Jenkins and Alan Betts.

26 May Walking The  
Ridgeway, led by Mike and  
Rae Thomas. Lunch at The  
Valiant Trooper.

23 Jun Scatterdell Woods, led  
by Alan and Carol Rose from  
The Paper Mill PH.

### **Toffee**

3<sup>rd</sup> Thurs 10.00am-12.00.

This month we were back in  
our usual place; our meeting  
was, as usual, very lively with a  
wide number of topics  
discussed. Refuse collection  
and why, in some areas, when  
we separate our refuse does it  
all go into the same container  
on collection? How many  
places around the world have  
the same name i.e. Perth  
Scotland and Perth Australia?  
In discussion we went through  
how this has happened, very  
interesting. Favourite foods and  
dislikes followed talking about  
the meal we shared at the  
college. I will not go on but the  
topics flow. We will not be  
meeting next month as it will  
be too close to the Easter  
Holiday, so we had our Hot  
Cross Buns this month. The  
group wish everyone a happy  
Easter.

Apr NO MEETING

19 May Next meeting.

### **Travel Group**

#### **Tuesday Trekkers**

Meet 9.45am for 10.00am.

12 Apr Jean and Peter will lead  
us to where?? ice skating??  
Meet The Green Dragon Pub,  
Waterside, London Colney,  
AL2 1RB, southern end of the  
High St.

May and June, warm weather  
volunteers required to lead  
walks. New members always  
welcome.

#### **Tuesday Ramblers**

4th Tue Meet varied.

This is a new group walking 10  
- 12 miles in 4-5 hours,  
stopping for a pub lunch mid-  
day. New members welcome.  
Details from John Carleton

#### **U3A Singers**

1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Mon 2.30pm.

Extra voices welcome!

#### **Walking**

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wed

Most walks meet JS A41.

Six miles 10.00am.

13 Apr Prestwood

27 Apr Aldenham

11 May London.

Met Station 9.00am.

25 May Tonwell

Contact Peter Manhire.

#### **Wine Appreciation**

Last Friday 2.30-4.30pm.

#### **Wit Knits'**

1<sup>st</sup> Monday 10.00am.

Various venues

#### **Writers Workshop**

Fortnightly Tues 2.00pm.

#### **U3A Study Afternoon Science & Conservation at the Royal Botanic Gardens,**

**Kew**

**Thursday 5 May**

**1.30-4.30 pm. £12.50**

*including refreshments.*

**Places are limited.**

#### **Details of Summer Schools**

**1. Newport 18-21 July**

**2. Cirencester 22-25  
August.**

**Contact Margaret Foster  
SG Coordinator**

**Any News from your Study  
Group?**

**COULD YOU HELP?**

**by writing an article about  
your group or one that you  
attend? Ed.**

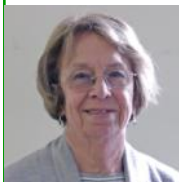
**Look at our website for more information :[www.watfordu3a.org.uk](http://www.watfordu3a.org.uk)**

## WU3A COMMITTEE

2010-2011



*Chairman*  
**Terry Godfrey**



*Secretary*  
**Margaret Redding**



*Vice Chairman*  
**John Friend**



*Treasurer*  
**Dick Chapman**

*Study Group Coordinator*  
**Margaret Foster**



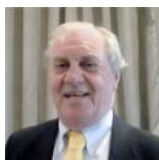
*Membership Secretary*  
**Alan Prest**

*Committee member*  
**Frances Ayrton**



*Minutes secretary*  
**Tricia Ashby**

*Speaker Secretary (Non Committee)*



## Peace Hospice Raffle March 2011

Particular thanks go to Yvonne and Michael Chapple and Arthur and Jean Driscoll for stepping in at the last minute to run the raffle, due to illness. Also thanks go to all the other people who helped and those who bought tickets.

You made **£297.30**, including a donation from the History Group- a good start for 2011.

### The next raffle will be in June

We will be pleased to collect any prize donations, or you can bring them to the monthly meetings. We sit at the back of the hall (on the right as you come in).

John and June Baughen

### VIRTUAL U3A

[www.vu3a.org.uk](http://www.vu3a.org.uk);

There is a Virtual U3A on line for those unable to attend an ordinary U3A. If you have any friends or know anyone who would benefit from this please pass it on. The website says "An important target group for this virtual development includes older people who are geographically isolated through illness or perhaps personal commitments (carers, for example)".

### Watford Fairtrade

Still seeking recruits to replace Jill Jenkins and Valerie Webster who have now left the Steering Group. To find out more please contact

**MICROSOFT OFFICE PROFESSIONAL 2007**  
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to order a copy, first contact Colin Richards  
[digitalequipment@watfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:digitalequipment@watfordu3a.org.uk)

### VUE CINEMA OVER 60s RATES

**Mon-Thurs** before 5p.m. £4.70. After 5p.m. £5.65  
**Fri** before 5 p.m. £5.65 After 5p.m. £6.30  
**Sat & Sun** £6.30

### SENIORS CLUB

**Mon at 12.00noon £3.50.**  
Selected films are shown and include tea and biscuits  
Titles can be obtained from the website

[www.myvue.com](http://www.myvue.com)  
or by telephone  
**08712 240240**

**CHARITY APPEALS**  
**6th North Watford Scout Group** (a registered charity) we are collecting **OLD PRINTER CARTRIDGES, TONERS AND OLD MOBILE PHONES.** We also collect Sainsburys Active Kids and Tesco Vouchers which are used to purchase a variety of goods. Your help will be much appreciated.  
**David & Sue Saunders.**  
**STAMPS**

We collect these for The Peace Hospice.  
**Marie & Barry Irwin**

### Members' Free Adverts

**FREE**  
Apple Mac G4 computer, keyboard and screen  
**Contact Philip Wolff**

Advertisements may be edited or omitted depending on space.

### Computer Repair

Home visits

Viruses cleaned; Memory upgrades; Data backups  
Price agreed in advance  
10 years repairing PCs  
John Boughton  
JB Computer Services  
01923 230607

**Watford U3A's Projector & Laptop computers**



To make a booking for a digital projector and a laptop computer contact:

**Colin Richards**  
[digitalequipment@watfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:digitalequipment@watfordu3a.org.uk)

### U3A Almoners

Irene Lowe  
Peggy Element  
Janet Carleton  
Kath McMahon

### Monthly Meeting Talks programme. 1st Tuesday

**10.00am - 12.00noon.**

**5 Apr** David Butler MBE Chairman of the British Motor Sport Association. 'Driving for the Disabled'.  
**3rd May** Kim Crundall Balance Nutrition: 'Nutritional advice in plain English'.

**For more detail contact Speaker Secretary:-**

**David Helliwell**

[speakers@watfordu3a.org.uk](mailto:speakers@watfordu3a.org.uk)

### Next Newsletter May

Copy for Study Group News can be sent anytime but **MUST** be received by:  
**20 April**

E-mail copy to:

[watfordu3a@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:watfordu3a@yahoo.co.uk)